



# ASAM

American Society of Addiction Medicine

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## **Public Policy Statement on the State of Recovery**

### **"Cure"**

Alcoholism is a chronic disease. Because relapse is possible even after many years of remission, we cannot use the term "cure."

### **"State of Recovery"**

A patient is in a "state of recovery" when he or she has reached a state of physical and psychological health such that his/her abstinence from dependency-producing drugs is complete and comfortable. In practice, this judgment must be made on clinical grounds, based on the most complete assessment possible of the state and seriousness of the initial illness and the quality and length of remission.

An alcoholic individual is in remission when he/she is free of the active signs and symptoms of alcoholism. This includes abstinence from the use of substitute sedative, stimulant or hallucinogenic drugs during a period of independent living. After a period of remission, which may vary for the individual, a state of recovery is achieved.

Indices of State of Recovery from alcoholism generally include:

1. Sobriety; comfortable abstinence from alcohol and/or other dependency-producing drugs.
2. Improvement in aspects of physical health previously adversely affected by alcohol use.
3. Improvement in family relationships and/or resolution of conflict in close relationships.
4. Improvement in functional responsibilities and self care.
5. Progress towards resolution of related emotional difficulties.
6. Willingness to share the recovering state.

**Application of this statement:**

For particular socially defined purposes such as entry into training for a career as an alcoholism counselor, or returning physician or an airplane pilot suffering from alcoholism to full practice of his or her profession, standard minimum periods of remission might be established. These minimum periods will differ according to social purpose, but in any case of their application, individual clinical factors in each patient's illness and remission must be given due consideration.

Adopted by ASAM Board of Directors February 1982

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